



EXPLORING POWER AND SEXUALITY IN ARUNDHATI ROY'S "THE GOD OF SMALL THINGS"

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INTRODUCTION

Arundhati Roy was born in Meghalaya to a Bengali Hindu father and a Malayali Syrian Christian mother who was a Women's Right's activist from Kerela. After her parent's divorce, she lived with her maternal grandfather in Ooty, Tamil Nadu with her mother and brother. When she attained the age of five, her family moved to Kerela where her mother started a school. She studied architecture and met an architect with whom she lived for several years until they broke up. Roy later married an independent filmmaker Pradip Krishen who introduced her to the film world. She wrote screenplays for television and movies. Roy ultimately became disenchanted with the film world and worked various jobs, including running aerobics classes. Roy and Krishen eventually split up.

Arundhati Roy started writing her first novel *The God of Small Things* in 1992 and completed it in 1996. It is semi-autobiographical in nature and a major portion captures her experiences as a child. Arundhati Roy rose to international fame with the publication of *The God of Small Things*. The book received the 1997 Booker Prize for Fiction and was listed as one of the New York Times notable books of the year for 1997 and reached the fourth position on the *New York Times* Bestseller's List for independent fiction. The book was also a great commercial success right from the beginning. Published in May, the book was sold in eighteen countries by the end of June. The book received a number of reviews in major American Newspapers such as the New York Times which labelled it as a "dazzling first novel", extraordinary and "at once so morally strenuous and also imaginatively supple". *The Los Angeles Times* calls it a "Novel of poignancy and considerable sweep", and the Canadian publication *Toronto Star* labelled it as a "lush, magical novel". In the meantime, in India the then Chief Minister of Roy's home state Kerela, Mr E.K Nayanar had criticised the book for its unrestrained description of sexuality and she was compelled to answer charges of obscenity.

The God of Small Things narrates the story of one family in the town of Ayemenem in Kerala, India. The temporal setting moves back and forth from 1969, when Rahel and Estha, a pair of fraternal twins were aged 7 years and to 1993 when Rahel and Estha are reunited at the age of 31. The Novel opens with Rahel returning to her childhood home in Ayemenem, India from the United States to see her twin brother Estha, who had been sent back to Ayemenem by their Father. Events of the past flash back to the time of the twin's birth and to the period before their parents got divorced. The funeral of Sophie Mol, Rahel and Estha's cousin is then described by the narrator. The point

where the twin's mother Ammu went to the Police station to say a terrible mistake had been made and two weeks hence, Estha was returned to their father are also described.

There is a brief description of the twins adult lives before they return to Ayemenem. In the present, Baby Kochamma gloats over the fact that Estha does not speak to Rahel just as he has not been speaking to anyone else for the past many years. The narrator then gives an overview of Baby Kochamma's life. The buildings that used to contain the family business, Paradise Pickles and Preserves now stands neglected and empty and when Rahel looks at them through the window, she recollects events of the past, the circumstances that surrounds Sophie Mol's death flashes back in her mind. Flashbacks are employed to tell the story of the family when the twins were still very young. Horrible memories are recalled, like that of the orangedrink lemondrink salesman who had molested Estha as a young boy: Sophie Mol's death; and Ammu's forbidden love with an untouchable, Velutha.

In *History of Sexuality Vol 1*, Michel Foucault considers what he calls "the repressive hypothesis". The common belief is that sex is something that the earlier period, particularly the nineteenth century has repressed and what the moderns have fought to liberate. However, Foucault suggests that sex in fact, is a complex idea produced by a range of social practices, investigations, talks and writings-discourses or discursive practices that came together in the nineteenth century. A variety of talks and discourses by doctors, clergy, novelists, psychologists, moralists, social workers, politicians—that we link with the idea of repression of sexuality were in fact ways of bringing into being the thing we call "sex". The notion of sex made it possible to group together, in an artificial unity, anatomical elements, biological functions, conducts, sensations, pleasures; and it enabled one to make use of this fictitious unity as a causal principle, an omnipresent meaning, a secret to be discovered everywhere. This artificial unity which we call "sex" came to be treated as fundamental to the identification of the individual. Foucault recognises the importance of the "sexual urge" and sexual nature—"where we expect our intelligibility to come from what was for many centuries thought as madness,... our identity from what was perceived as animal urge. Hence the importance we ascribe to it, the reverential fear with which we surround it, the care we take to know it. Hence the fact that over the centuries it has become more important to us than our soul." The creation in the nineteenth century of the homosexual as a type, almost a species is one illustration of the way sex was made the secret of the individual being, a key source of the

individual's identity.

In the 18th and 19th century, society began taking an interest in sexualities within the world of "perversion", that includes the sexuality of children, the mentally ill, the criminal and the homosexual. He argues that labelling of perverts conveyed a sense of 'pleasure and power'. He believes that the bourgeoisie society exhibited "blatant and fragmented perversion", readily engaging in perversity but regulating where it could take place. In the earlier periods acts of sexual intercourse between individuals of the same sex was stigmatized, but now it has become a question not of acts but of identity, not of whether someone had performed forbidden acts but of whether he was a homosexual. Sodomy was an act, Foucault writes, but "the homosexual was now a species". Foucault treats sex as an effect rather than a cause. It is the attempt to know the truth about human beings that has produced sex as the secret of human nature.

Foucault introduces the concept of *Ars Erotica* and *Scientia Sexualis*. The knowledge passed on by *Ars erotica* is a knowledge of sensual pleasure. The truth it contains is the truth about pleasure itself: how pleasure can be experienced, intensified or maximized. The *Scientia Sexualis*, by contrast deals with confessions extracted from the unlearned rather than secrets passed down from the learned. Since the middle ages, Foucault asserts that confessions have become increasingly important to us. Foucault writes we have become "subjects in both senses of the word". We are subjected to powers that draw confessions from us, and through confessions we come to see ourselves as thinking subjects, the subject of confession. *Ars Erotica* then focuses largely on sex as a human phenomenon, something we do, something we enjoy, something we desire. *Scientia Sexualis* highlights sex as a form of reproduction that we indulge in much the same way as animals. *Ars Erotica* speaks from personal experience, while *Scientia Sexualis* speaks from the perspective of a distanced observer.

Further, Foucault explores the concept of power. He highlights the manner in which the feudal absolute monarchies, themselves a form of power, disguised their intentions by claiming that they were necessary to maintain law, order and peace. He argues that this concept of power as emanating from law still persists with many westerners and rejects it by stating that we must conceive of sex without law and power without the king. Foucault explains that power is not the domination or subjugation exerted on society by the Government or the State. Power is rather understood 'as the multiplicity of free relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate'. (History 92) He argues, "Power is everywhere....it comes from everywhere' (93), emanating from all social relationships and being imposed throughout the society bottom up rather than top-down. He suggests that power exists at the level of everyday practice and everyday exchanges between subjects. Lastly, Foucault asserts that motivation for power over life and death have changed. Power has now become concerned with how to foster life.

In Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* power structures are carefully delineated. Mammachi, Baby Kochamma, the

policeman stand apart within their realms of power and they see to it that the transgressors –Ammu, Velutha, the twins who hold no power in the social hierarchies, who had no "Locust stand I", remain vulnerable and hence overruled. It is interesting to note that Pappachi (the twin's grandfather), in spite of his outwardly British trappings has remained stubbornly rooted in the power structure that their tradition had bestowed upon them. Mammachi is a true representative of the old generation of women who gracefully submits herself to the patriarchal society by subsuming her own identity into her husband's. Moreover, besides her husband, Mammachi is dominated by Chacko, her privileged Oxford educated son who upon returning takes over Mammachi's factory and refers to it as "...my factory, my pineapples, my pickles." (57) Foucault, in explaining the power dynamics posited "where there is power, there is resistance." (94) Likewise, Mammachi's blind submission to patriarchy seems to be a defensive gesture rather than an honest agreement with hegemonic powers as we would see after the passing away of the family Patriarch and upon coming her own she had the oil portraits of Reverend E. John Ipe and Aleyooty Ammachhi (the twins' great-grandparents) taken down from the back verandah and put up in the front one. This small detail, which may be insignificant in itself is indicative of the way in which the power structure undergoes a change within the parameters of the family structure, reflecting in principle what Foucault had said:

Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. And "power", in so far as it is permanent, repetitious, inert, self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement.... power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society. (History of Sexuality Vol 1 93)

Power is not stagnant, it is "the process through which ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens or reverses them" (92). It is in this manner that the erstwhile repressed wife of Pappachi assumes for herself the role of the empowered matriarch. Injustice meted out to her, the repeated beatings from Pappachi, his jealousy at her success making her life difficult and her battle against blindness brings out the survival instinct in her which in turn gives her power. In Mammachi's case, the assertion of her personal authority has an economic basis for it is with the establishment of the pickle factory that she finds her way out of the shadow of her husband's dominance.

As pointed out by Moon Moon Mazumder in her *Essays in Literary criticism*, in Mammachi's case the co-existential field of sexuality and power is subtle and complex. There is a reversal from powerlessness to power, from the adoration of her husband to that of her son, Chacko. The beatings that she had endured from her husband for so long and her son's intervention which led to the end of the beatings has resulted in a kind of oedipal outpouring of love and affection for her son. So much so that she theorizes on a split between love and lust

or physico-sexual appetite and thus justifies her son's frequent libidinous incursions into the female work force of the pickle factory as fulfillment of "men's needs". Ironically Mammachi cannot tolerate her daughter's relationship with Velutha—"Her (Mammachi's) tolerance of "men's needs" as far as her son was concerned, became a fuel for her unmanageable fury at her daughter.

A different sort of power structure is created by skin colour and race. A white skin is an ideal of beauty and leaves anyone with dark skin in a lower standing. Sophie Mol is "hatted, bottomed and loved from the very beginning" (*The God* 186). What is peculiar to the behaviour of the entire family is the out of bounds glorification of the west, especially in Baby Kochamma. Her sense of inferiority at being Indian makes her speak with an artificial accent and ask Sophie Mol questions on Shakespeares' "the tempest". All these were primarily aimed at announcing her credentials to Margaret Kochamma, Chacko's English wife to set herself apart from the sweeper class" (144).

Powerplay is also seen in the actions of the Inspector Thomas Mathew who "stared at Ammu's breast as he spoke".—"If I were you," he said, "I'd go home quietly." Then he tapped her breasts gently tap,tap.(8) As though he was choosing mangoes from a basket. Pointing to the ones that he wanted to packed and delivered. Inspector Thomas seemed to know whom he could pick on and whom he couldn't. Policemen have that instinct.

In *History of Sexuality* vol 1 Foucault speaks of the two apparatuses that the "relation of sex gave rise (to) in every society-First," a deployment of alliance" and second, the "deployment of sexuality." He distinguishes between the two apparatuses, the former consisting of kinship ties that exist in almost every culture. It consists of a number of spoken or unspoken rules regarding marriage, family ties, ancestry and so on which is defined "as a system of marriage, of fixation and development of kinship ties of transmission of names and possessions". The latter which he calls "the deployment of sexuality" is "concerned with the sensations of the body, the quality of pleasures and the nature of impressions". The latter has increasingly come to replace the former in the modern society and is far less regulatory and far more variegated. While the deployment of alliance essentially works to maintain the stable structure of society, the deployment of sexuality provides an ever-changing structure that allows us to interpret a range of phenomena in their relation to sex and pleasure. Foucault suggests that the deployment of sexuality evolved from the deployment of alliance, as the earlier emphasis on what sorts of relations were permitted was replaced by an emphasis on what sort of sensations were permitted. In a sense, therefore, the love law that Roy talks about are what concerns Foucault when he speaks of the two apparatuses. According to Foucault sexual behaviours in western countries underwent a change in many ways and demonstrated that the anti-repressive struggle is a tactical shift and reversal in the great deployment of sexuality.

All things said and done, *The God of Small Things* is a Family novel which goes back to the twin's great great grandfather who had literally pushed the yet to be Reverend E. John Ipe

into kissing the ring of the Patriarch of Antioch, the Sovereign of the Syrian Christian Church. What is foregrounded in the family structure is what Foucault terms "the deployment of alliance" for underneath all these diverse relationships there are issues such "system(s) of marriage, of fixation and deployment of kinship ties, of transmission of names and possessions". We find the last attribute when we are told as early as in chapter 2 that the twins after their mother Ammu got divorced from their father," for the time being....had no surname because Ammu was considering reverting to her maiden name ..." (*The God* 36). Rahel also discovers much later in chapter 7 that "on the front of book, Estha had rubbed out his surname with spit, and taken off half the paper with it. Over the whole mass, he had written in pencil un-known. His surname postponed for the time being while Ammu chose between her husband's name and her father's." (156-7)

We are also reminded over and over that Ammu has no Locusts Stand I. A fact that Chacko told Rahel and Estha too. Though Ammu worked as hard as Chacko he had always referred to everything as 'his' as "legally, this was the case because Ammu, as a daughter, had no claim to the property". Chacko has always made it a point to tell Ammu that "what's yours is mine and what's mine is also mine" (57). Ammu lived on sufferance on the Ayemenem house for a married daughter had no position in her parent's home according to a commonly held view. The perspective of Ammu's aunt in this matter is that "As for a divorced daughter—according to Baby Kochamma, she had no position anywhere at all. And as for a divorced daughter from a love marriage, well, words could not describe Baby Kochamma's outrage. As for a divorced daughter from an intercommunity love marriage—Baby Kochamma chose to remain quiveringly silent on the subject." (45-46)

The other kind of apparatus Foucault employs is the deployment of sexuality. Sexuality isn't a "thing" that is then repressed by power, or that must be discovered through careful investigation. Sexuality is a social construct that channels a variety of different power relations. Our concept of sexuality is built by the strategies that make use of it: it serves as a network that joins together physical sensations and pleasure, the incitement to discourse, the formation of specialized knowledge, and political controls and resistance.

Foucault identifies four centers which he terms as "four great strategic which, beginning in the eighteenth century, formed specific mechanisms of knowledge and power centering on sex" (*History* 1 104).

First, the "hysterization of women's bodies" has led us to think of the female body first as highly sexual and second as an object of medical knowledge. The female body, as a center for reproduction, has also come to be considered a matter of public interest and public control.

Second, the "pedagogization of children's sex" which is "a double assertion that practically all children indulge or are prone to indulge in sexual activity." He sees children as highly sexual creatures, and sees this sexuality as something dangerous

that needs to be monitored and controlled by “parents,families ,educators, doctors,and eventually psychologists.”

Third, the “socialization of procreative behavior” sees reproduction and therefore sex as a matter of public importance, and disapproves of non- procreative sex.

Fourth, the “psychiatrization of perverse pleasure” is the result of studying sex as a medical and psychiatric phenomenon. It highlights divergences from normal sexual behavior and identifies them as illnesses that need correcting. Foucault emphasizes that these four centers do not “repress” sexuality; the concept of sexuality does not exist except as it is framed by these discourses.

The deployment of sexuality is manifested predominantly in the novel-“four privileged objects of knowledge, which were also targets and anclorage points for the ventures of knowledge :the hysterical woman, the masturbating child ,the Malthusian couple,and the perverse adult.Each of them correspond to one of these strategies which, each in its own way ,invested and made use of women, children and men.”(105)

Foucault in *The History of Sexuality* vol I talks about what he calls “*Scientia Sexualis*”:a science of sexuality which is based on a phenemenon diametrically opposed to *Ars Erotica*: the confession. It is not just a question of Christian confession, but more generally the urge to talk about it. We have since become a singularly confessing society. The confession has spread its effects far and wide. It plays a part in justice, medicine, education, family relationships, and love relationships, in most ordinary affairs of everyday life life, and in the most solemn rites; one confesses one’s crimes, one’s sins, one’s thoughts and desires, one’s illnesses and troubles; one goes about telling, with the greatest precision, whatever is most difficult to tell”. (*History* vol 1 59)

Baby Kochamma’s “repressed sexuality” finds expression in her erotic desires for the Irish priest-turned-Hindu savant Father Mulligan which she enters in her diary:

For Baby Kochamma, Father Mulligan’s death did not alter the text of the entries in her diary ...“If anything, she possessed him in death in a way that she never had while he was alive. least her memory of him was he Savagely, fiercely, hers....once he was dead, Baby Kochamma stripped Father Mulligan of his ridiculous saffron robes and reclothed him in the coca-cola cassock she so loved...Her senses feasted, between changes, on that lean, concave, Christ-like body (*The God* 298)

The sensations of the body – “touch and smell and taste and sight ‘- rule over the relationship of Ammu and Velutha. Ammu dreams, probably of Velutha, which overflows with these sensations. He held her close, by the light of an oil lamp, and he shone as though he had been polished with a high wax body polish’....she could have touched his body lightly with her fingers,and felt his smooth skin turn to gooseflesh....”.The sensual description touches upon every aspect of the five senses.

“*His skin was salty. Hers too
They just stood together.
Still.
Skin to skin. (216)*

A construction of sexuality as a matter of physical body, seen in terms of its physicality and sensationism is reflected in Mammachi’s vivid imagination of her daughter’s copulation with the untouchable veluth : “Like animals”, she thought. Like a dog with a bitch on heat. Spasms of sensory revulsions are aroused and Baby Kochamma articulates, ‘How could she stand the smell? Haven’t you noticed? They have a particular smell, these paravans.’(*The God* 257) At this point there is a covergence of the two apparatuses, the need to protect the family prestige, arising out of systems of alliance which conflicts with the deployment of sexuality leading finally to the expulsion of Ammu who is made to pack her bags and leave and Estha be returned to his father. It was Baby Kochhama of course playing her part in deliberately stoking the fire in Mammachi’s anger and channelling her destructive energies on Chacko’s grief –“she gnawed like a rat into the godown of Chacko’s grief.”

Foucault’s work is important because it proposes that sexuality is not simply the natural expression of some inner drive or desire. The discourses on sexuality postulates the operation of power in human relationships as much as they govern the production of personal identity. At the core of the novel lies the fundamental truth that all relationships, familial and social are ‘underpinned by the normative functions of sexual formations, relationships existent between the husband and wife, women and lovers, a brother and his twin sister.” It is such sexual interanimations that are cumulative as the “Love Laws” by Arundhati Roy and defined as:

The laws that lay down who should be loved and how.
And how much. The laws that make grandmothers
grandmothers, uncles uncles, mothers mothers, cousins
cousins jam jam and jelly jelly (31)

In *God of Small Things*, Roy explores the reversal of the ordered world, the “love laws” through the Ammu-velutha and Rahel-Estha relationships which are volatile and dangerous, which could easily fall under what is categorised as “queer” in that they transgress the love laws which dictates “who should be loved and how. And how much”. The force behind the breaking of these set laws by the characters are sexuality, desire and eroticism which act as a challenge to “repressive powers”.

Gender Theory, a product of deconstruction can be described as a form of resistance against the established notion of gender. It attempts to deconstruct the general belief of the society paving a way for the deconstruction of gender binary. In other words, it made possible a variety of alternatives in the world of gender. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the closet* argues that standard binary opposition limit freedom and understanding , especially in relation to sexuality. According to her, limiting sexuality to homosexuals to heterosexuals, in a structured binary opposition is too simplistic.

William J. Spurlin in *I'd rather be the princess than the Queen! Mourning Diana* as a gay Icon asserts that he uses the term 'queer' to denote an oppositional political praxis which operates against normalizing ideologies in general (e.g. race, gender, class, nationality) in addition to sexuality. Thus, he sets out to explain how Diana in many senses an extremely conventional, privileged heterosexual may be regarded as queer. She is identified as "sexually straight" but functioning as "politically queer".

Kari Saipu, the Black Sahib, the owner of "the History House", the Englishman who had "gone native" is the only outwardly perceived gay person in *The God of Small Things*. His character is demonized and marginalized and is left to interpretation just as the novel is. He is described in the novel as having "shot himself through the head ten years ago, when his young lovers parents had taken away from him and sent him to school". His character is a mystery just as his house is, "when we look in through the windows, all we see are shadows. And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering. And we cannot understand the whispering, because our minds have been invaded by a war" (*The God* 53). In other words, the queer remains a mystery for most and yet their existence cannot be denied. In Sedgwick's account, sexualities have never been clearly defined, marked as they are by haziness, indistinctness, and conflict.

We also find early in the novel Estha's traumatic paedophilic sexual encounter with the orange drink Lemon drink Man which is one of the causes of his later withdrawal from his family and the world. The perversion of the orange drink Lemon drinkman is another example of what may be termed as "queer". This incident reflects what Foucault says when he talks about a psychiatrization of perverse pleasure. Estha is further seen as a non-conforming individual ridiculed because of his affinity for chores associated with women. "Instead, much to the initial embarrassment of his father and stepmother, he began to do the housework...he did the sweeping, swabbing and all the laundry. He learned to cook and shop for vegetables" (p 11). Rahel on the other hand made people whisper that she behaved "as though she didn't know how to be a girl". Margorie Garber had quoted one professor in *The return to Biology* "we're mixed bags, all of us".... the borders between classic maleness and femaleness are much grayer than people realized". In the twins Estha and Rahel, there appears to be an intermingling of the male and the female, something similar to what Freud had written as expressed by a spokesman of male inverts that there is "a feminine brain in a masculine body" while explaining the theory of bisexuality.

In spite of the overtly gay persons playing the minor role in the novel, resistance of "the established norm" pervades the relationship of the major characters of *The God of Small Things*. The characters are driven to break the set laws by sexuality, desire and eroticism which acts as a challenge to the repressive powers. The Ammu-velutha relationship transgresses the "love laws" in that Ammu is the daughter of the upper caste, upper-caste Syrian Christian Ipe family while velutha is an untouchable "paravan". Ammu, a divorcee is able to love

velutha for only 13 nights before velutha's father sees the "untouchable" son touching the "touchable" Ammu and reports them to Mammachi out of loyalty and gratitude towards the Ipe family. The relationship between an untouchable and a touchable was perceived by the policemen as "contrary to nature and dangerous to society". They were "only history's henchmen. Sent to square the books and collect the dues from those who broke the laws": "impelled by feelings that were primal yet paradoxically wholly impersonal. Feelings of contempt born of inchoate, unacknowledged fear-civilization's fear of nature, men's fear of women, power's fear of powerlessness. Man's subliminal urge to destroy what he could neither subdue nor destroy... after all, they were not battling an epidemic. They were merely inoculating a community against an outbreak." (*The God* 309) An outbreak that can be seen as a protest by two angry young people Ammu and Velutha. A protest targeted at the quotidian norms of family and society, against class and caste, against the distinction between love and sex publicly proclaimed by the likes of Ammachi.

The lovers discover in each other what is denied to them by the law-governed world. They both knew instinctively that they will have to pay for their transgressions. Velutha rationalizes, "What's the worst thing that can happen? I could lose everything. My Job. My Livelihood. Everything" (334).

With Ammu it is a fight against divisions ushered in by society and history, a compulsive drive, something she engages in with the rage of a 'Suicide bomber'. We are told that "she developed a lofty sense of injustice and the mulish, reckless streak that develops in someone small who has been bullied all their lives by someone Big. She did nothing to avoid quarrels and confrontations. In fact she sought them out, even perhaps enjoyed them." (*The God* 181-2)

On a similar note, the Rahel-Estha relationship, like their mother Ammu's relationship is a transgression from the ordered world. Rahel and Estha, the two egg twins, upon meeting each other after 23 years of separation break the "love laws" by indulging in an incestual relationship. The fear does not stop them; it only induces them further and arouses in them the need for mental and physical oneness. Rahel gives herself body and soul to the empty and silent Estha and what happened next is described in the book as "nothing that (in Mammachi's book) would separate sex from love". Their coming together sexually postulates a sharing of grief and despair and signifies that "only that Quietness and Emptiness fitted together like stacked spoons". In *The History of Sexuality* vol I, Foucault had said, "in societies where mechanisms of alliance predominate, prohibition of incest is a functionally indispensable rule" (109). In Rahel-Estha relationship however Incest is the only way by which they can refigure and bring back their sense of wholeness as a family once again. If we are to consider their desire as perverse, perhaps a recourse to Foucault will develop a new understanding, "The implantation of perversions is an instrument effect: It is through the isolation, intensification and consolidation or peripheral sexualities that relations of power to sex and pleasure branched out and multiplied, measured the body, and penetrated modes of conduct... pleasure and power

do not cancel or turn back against one another. They are linked together by complex mechanisms and devices of excitement and incitement. (48)

All these characters as Roy states in the novel “have crossed into the forbidden territory. They have tampered with the laws that lay down who should be loved and how much. And how much.” (*The God* 31) The power relation is enacted in a manner in which natural instinct instincts of desire eroticism and sexuality challenge and transgress caste-based, class-based, gender-based ‘love-laws’. Embedded in the novel is the notion of confinement of people whom we consider as insane in an attempt to hide their queerness.- “Ammu was locked into her bedroom and she became “incoherent with rage and disbelief at what was happening to her- at being locked away like the family lunatic in a medieval house-hold (252)

What was it that gave Ammu this Unsafe Edge? This air of unpredictability? It was what she had battling inside her. An unmixable mix. The infinite tenderness of motherhood and the reckless rage of a suicide bomber. (*The God* 321)

In Foucault, the whole concept of madness is concerned with passion and delirium. There is a level of lunacy that creeps in all of us. This aspect is reflected in the lines:

Anything’s possible in Human Nature,” Chacko said in his Reading Aloud voice. Talking to the darkness now, suddenly insensitive to his little fountain-haired niece. “Love. Madness. Hope. Infinite joy.”(14)

Estha locks himself away from the rest of the family and the world and falls into morbid silence. He no longer speaks to anyone, not even his twin sister because “modern man no longer communicates with the mad man. There is no common language: or rather it no longer exists...” (Foucault, Preface to 1961 edition) In *The God of Small Things*, Roy juxtaposes the Small things-Ammu, the twins, Velutha- against the Big things-Mammachi, Baby Kochamma. The “big thing” unite whenever they face a threat from the small things. It presents life in “God’s own country” which is not quite Godly. Against the Godly scenery of Kerala, the characters find themselves sinned against, their innocence raped and their lives shattered.

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